

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON

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The Reverend Mr. Croswell's

Late Letter &c.

Designed

To remove Prejudices it tends to excite against
the Truth :

AND

To shew that the principal Doctrines contained and
contended for therein, are not only not according
to Truth, but opposite thereto.

By A. CUMMING, A.M.

"Take heed what ye hear."

BOSTON,

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M,DCC,LXIII.

A. N. I. M. A. D. V. E. R. S. I. O. N.

TO ME

The Reverend Mr. Gifford's

Dear Sir

Received

Your most obliging letter of the 10th inst.

in relation to

the same

and in answer to which I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the same and to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.



Yours faithfully,
A. N. I. M. A. D. V. E. R. S. I. O. N.

cc. sent to the Rev. Mr. Gifford

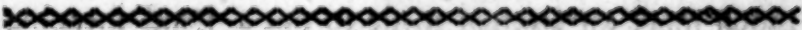
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of the Rev. Mr. Gifford in connection with the same

1850



ANIMADVERSIONS, &c.



A Narrative of the occasion of Mr. *Croswell's* letter seems to be the most proper introduction to the following remarks upon it.

In a conversation with Mr. *Bellamy*, about mens different notions of the Deity, on which they build their systems of vertue and religion, I mentioned, by way of instance, a position delivered in a sermon by Mr. *Croswell*. It was to the best of my remembrance, in the following words; *A damning God is not an object of love.*" Mr. *B—y* ask'd, what I thought of it. My answer was, that it was blasphemy: For, if it was true, no wise and good being, could or ought to love the true God; in as much as it was unquestionable, that he came under this denomination.—A few days afterwards Mr. *B—y*, meeting with Mr. *C—ll*, ask'd him, whether ever he had delivered such a position. He own'd that he had — and ask'd, who inform'd him of it. Mr. *B—y* answered, that I did — He ask'd again, what I said of it — Mr. — *B—y* reply'd, "He said, it was blasphemy."

Not

Not long after this conversation, meeting Mr. C— in the street, he demanded of me, whether I had told Mr. B—y, that he had preached blasphemy. I answered, that I had heard him deliver the sentiment above recited ; and that it appear'd such to me. He reply'd. that his meaning was, *that no man can love God while he looks on him as one that will damn HIM.* Sir, said I, there is no meaning you can put upon it, but what is liable to the same charge. The position appeared so extremely injurious to the divine character, that it surprized me to find any disposition shewn, much more an attempt made to put a good meaning upon it. This was in effect to maintain and support the position. It supposed that true. at least in some respect, which if it be in any, all foundation of the love and worship of God is destroyed for ever. A position so directly subversive of all the foundations of vertue, seem'd not entitled to the priviledge of being explain'd. It ought to have been absolutely retracted. But to confess the truth, the explanatory position seem'd to me at bottom, just as bad as the original sentiment. The one is blasphemy in the very matter of it ; and the other is equally so in its *spirit* and *import* : The malignancy of the one is obvious and open ; of the other, more latent and involved.

Had Mr. *Croswell* said, that no man will love God while he looks on him as one that will damn him ; this sentiment might have sav'd the divine character. It would have laid the reason and fault of not loving God at a man's own door ; and so maintain'd God's unchangeable worthiness of man's love in every state and condition. It would have maintained the rectitude and excellence of the divine character in every dispensation and act of his government, and left the ground of love to him unshaken in every act,

act, even that of casting off a Sinner; and executing on him the full punishment of the Law.

But the assertion that no man *can* love God while he looks on him as one that will damn him, from the mouth of one who before affirmed, and had never retracted it, that a damning God is not an object of love, seem'd to me to carry in it a reflection on the divine character several ways. — It resolved the reason of a man's not loving God in a particular case, and of his not being able to do it into God's conduct towards him as the moral governour of the world. And this is in effect to impute ~~to~~ a man's not loving God, and his inability to do so, not to the depravity and badness of his heart, but to the part which God acts towards him. So the blame and fault of not loving God, and of all impotency with respect hereto, is removed from the sinner, and transfer'd to the governour of the world, and his administration. — Nay, it will carry the matter farther, even to a denial of all blame or faultiness in a man's not loving God in the case supposed. For if any conduct in God be the cause why a man can't love him, or be that which properly hinders him, or makes the act impossible to him, [either in a natural or moral respect] his not loving God on this supposition, can't be any sin or fault, nor be imputed as such. For of the faultiness of all omissions, this is a fundamental ground, viz. that there was no inability, hinderance, or impossibility, as to the person's doing the act, but what proceeded wholly from his wicked disposition, or the badness of his heart. — God's dispensations and acts are not the cause in any respect either natural or moral, why any of his rational creatures cannot love him; and any sentiment that doth even obliquely intimate any thing of this sort, appears to me an aspersion on the divine character and administration.

Again,

Again, the above assertion is unfriendly to the divine character, in assigning his conduct as the cause why any man can't love him, in an other view—To assign any act of divine government absolutely as the cause of the impossibility of not loving God in any case, doth carry in it too much of an intimation, that this act is in some respect a blemish in his character ; a diminution of his loveliness. And any assertion that doth any way imply this as it's ground, is certainly dishonourable to the divine being. For, if the divine character retain all its beauty and loveliness undiminished, even in the act of punishing a sinner to the extent of his demerit, this act, nor any relation it has to the sinner, can never be the cause, more or less, why he can't love God. Nor can it be assign'd as such but at the expence of the divine character. Such an assignment doth carry in it a secret intimation that this act of God is some blemish in his character, some diminution of his loveliness. Otherwise it is no reason of the impossibility of a man's ~~not~~ loving God. The reason hereof must arise from and wholly lie in something else.

Farther, not only does the above assertion assign an injurious reason of the impossibility of a man's ~~not~~ loving God ; but it removes out of view, it if doth not tacitly disallow the only true and entire reason hereof in all cases. This is an entire moral depravity of heart, or a total destitution of all true moral goodness ; or absence of all the proper principles of true virtue, together with the consequences and effects naturally arising thence.—Besides, considering the purpose for which Mr C—// advanced it, and his avowed principles, the assertion, as from him, appear'd to subvert the true primary objective ground of all true love to God, viz. the absolute essential excellence of his

his character. And it substituted in the room here-
of, God's loving the sinner, and forgiving his sins, or
some act that related to self-interest; as the only possi-
ble primary ground of any man's love to God.—
But this origin and foundation of vertue, is strongly
and repeatedly rejected as false in the word of God.
It is a fundamental scripture maxim, That the
love of any person to another, which originates
from, or is primarily founded on ~~that~~ other's love
to him, has nothing in it of the nature of truly vir-
tuous or gracious love, but is compatible with the
worst characters. Persons who have not the least
grain of true goodness, vertue or grace, may love
others on this ground. See for the present, *Luk.*
6. 32. *Mat.* 5. 46. *

Thus the only true primary ground of all truly vir-
tuous love, being implicitly destroyed or denied in the
assertion, & this false ground substituted in the room
thereof, there was no foundation left at all for the
being or practice of any thing else but spurious vertue
and false religion, in the world.

These were the grounds in general of my opinion
and declaration to Mr. C—ll, that his last assertion
was blasphemy, † as well as the first. Whether they
were sufficient, I have no disposition to controvert
with him, as it would be of no service to the
cause of truth. But as I am further convinced,
from his own explications in his letter, that divers
B of

* I desire one favour here of every reader : to read on
this matter Mr. *Edwards* on religious affections ; par-
ticularly his second & third sign ; where this point is
fully cleared and evinced : And also in Mr. *Bellamy's*
Essay &c. throughout the whole.

† But let it be observ'd that I did not say Mr. C—ll was

of his sentiments, and indeed some leading principles in his system, are wrong and prejudicial to truth and virtue ; I shall look on it my duty to manifest that they are so, as long and as often as it will be likely to serve to the establishment of truth, or the removal of prejudices against it.

Now on account of the said opinion of his assertion, express'd only to himself privately, he hath tho't fit to open a public controversy with me. He hath printed a letter to shew me, that it is not blasphemy to say &c.—And he professeth to have been entirely determined hereto from the purest motives that ever actuated any creature. But there is not, I think, a correspondence in the execution of the letter, to this account of its original. Sometimes the quarrel is almost quite changed from things to persons ; sometimes the most serious things are treated with low banter. And in general the method used by Mr. C—ll, seems much more adapted to render those odious, who are not in his System, than it is either to disprove their principles, or establish his own. It greatly consists in imputing to them divers absurd opinions they disclaim and never maintain'd, expressly, or by consequence ; and then urging these absurdities, as a proof of the falshood and nonsense of their system, and of the truth and soundness of his own.— This conduct in Mr. C—ll makes it necessary in the first place to take notice of some of those absurd opinions, in

a blasphemer. What was said had a respect not to him at all, but only to his positions. I think it is very plain that an assertion may imply blasphemy, and yet the assertor, not necessarily be a blasphemer : and that there is an obvious difference between saying, that an assertion implies blasphemy or falshood, and saying, that the assertor is a blasphemer or a liar.

in order to shew how unjustly and inconsequentially he hath imputed them to the Persons he hath mentioned in his letter, and attacked.

1. It is imputed as our opinion, that a person must be contented & willing to be damned, or made miserable forever. The spirit of the letter very much consists in this imputation; and it seems very much the aim and tendency of it, to make the reader believe, that this is our doctrine. And I doubt not but that it hath had an effect upon some, agreeable to the Author's wish: they having concluded, that surely such an one as Mr. C—ll, would not charge it so boldly and so frequently upon us, if he had not good grounds for it.— But we reject this opinion as absurd, and the imputation of it as unjust and inconsequential. Nor do I believe, that any sober man ever held or taught it, however much it hath been imputed to divers.

My doctrine, I own, is the same with Mr. *Shepherd's*: and with him, Mr. *Hooper*, I apprehend, agrees; tho' his expression be not so guarded as to cut off all occasion of exception.—The doctrine we maintain, that hath given occasion to the above imputation, may be summed up in these particulars.— 1. That it is just in God, and consistent with every branch of his character, forever to cast off and destroy all sinners as such. 2. That with respect to every sinner, it is an act of sovereign grace to save him, or to do any thing towards this end. If the former be true, the latter must be so of consequence. All the grace and glory of the gospel, fundamentally depends on the truth of these propositions. There is no glory in the gospel, if either of them be false. No glory can be seen in the gospel, if the truth of them be not clearly seen and felt—And hence, 3. A sinner must see it righteous in God to cast him off for ever: So that

if he should never shew him mercy, but destroy him, his mouth may be stopped; all murmurings and heart-risings against God subdued, as dealing unrighteously or hardly with him; or in any wise inconsistently with his character, promises, or declarations. And if he be not in effect bro't to this, he will never believe in Christ. The light in which he views things is utterly inconsistent with this act. — For a sinner to believe in Christ, while he is not sensible of the justice of God in his destruction, while he is full of heart-risings against God on this account, is impossible. For he doth not admit and feel that to be true, which this act, in it's very nature supposeth, and is built upon, as a fundamental ground. He can't accept salvation as meer grace; for he doth not see it to be so in its own nature. And he can't see it to be so in it's nature, while he doth not from real conviction see & acquiesce in it, that his destruction is a righteous & becoming act in God.

When Mr. *Sheperd* therefore says, that a man must be quiet with the will of God, 'tis not the import of the expression, that he must be contented to be damned; or quiet in this respect, that he must sit still, and not seek after mercy and salvation: — But that he must be convinced of the justice and meetness of God's casting him off, that an end may be put to all his objections and heart-risings against God on this account. A man is then quiet with the will of God, when his heart-risings and objections against it are subdued; when he no longer blames or faults God, as dealing any ways hardly or unrighteously with him.

Now is there no difference in a man's being thus quiet and acquiescing in God's act in his destruction as righteous; acknowledging it a righteous thing in God to make him miserable for ever, and his being willing and contented to be so; chusing, loving and delighting in his own eternal misery? or doth the former in any wise imply the

the latter ? The difference methinks is so obvious, that too to confound them, must argue great inattention or prejudice. — To be willing to be miserable, to love misery in itself, is contrary to the principle of self-love, absolutely considered : and therefore must be wrong and absurd. But is it contrary to this principle absolutely considered, or to any regular exercises of it, for a sinner to be convinced of, and entirely acquiesce, in the righteousness of God's act in his destruction ? That damnation is what he deserves, and that therefore it is no blemish in God's character to inflict it on him ; that God is not in any respect less amiable, or less an object of love on this account ? Is this contrary to the principle of self-preservation ? Doth this conviction and view of things imply more or less the absurd notion, imputed in the letter, that a man must be willing to be damned ? Let every thoughtful person judge for himself.

2. It is imputed as our opinion, that a man must believe absolutely, that God will damn him, in order to his being the subject of true love to God. What is thus absolutely imputed as our opinion, is absolutely contrary to it. With regard to this matter, I would observe — An unregenerate sinner can't certainly know that God will grant him grace, or forgiveness of sins, or salvation : Because there is nothing in or about such an one, that is in the nature of things, or by any declaration or promise of God, connected with this grant. 'Tis an act of meer grace in God, to which there is nothing to move him, but his own absolute pleasure. — On the other hand, no such sinner can know absolutely, that God will not give him grace. He may certainly know, that if he continue impenitent, he will be destroyed : But he can't know, that however he seek God, he will not give him grace

to

to repent and believe : there is nothing to hinder God, if he pleases. He may shew mercy, and bestow his grace, and so save him. No sinner doth or can know that he woult ; unless he knows that he hath committed that sin, which is peculiarly the sin unto death.— So in general, persons can't know absolutely, that God will destroy them. It is not an object of knowledge, either in it self, or by it's connection with any thing that is known or certain. And if it be not an object of knowledge or certainty, it can't be an object of faith. There is no ground for any person's believing absolutely, that God will damn him, except, as is before excepted. So that the absolute conclusions of this kind, persons make in their own minds, are the effect of a disordered imagination, or some satannic influence. They are neither conclusions from scripture or reason.

But tho' the sinner can't know, that God will absolutely cast him off ; therefore can't believe it on any just and certain ground ; yet he may and ought to believe, that God may righteously do it. There is nothing in the Sinner to hinder him. There are those things in him that are wont to move God to cast off persons, and that are allowed to justify God in so doing. There is nothing in God's character or perfections to forbid it. His character and perfections, as the moral governor of the world, make it a right and meet act. 'Tis a proper and suitable treatment of such an one as he is, according to all the rules of moral government.— Supposing therefore, that God should cast him off absolutely, he can have no quarrel with him on this account. There is no ground for it, unless it be supposed that God hath dealt unfairly or unjustly by him.— No reason can arise hence, why he can't love God. God hath not done any thing that is a reason why he can't be loved by this person,
or

er any other, as well now as before ; unless it be supposed, that in this conduct, God hath acted so bad and unbecoming a part, that he can't remain an object of love ; that his character is no longer amiable ; or it is not, nor ever can be after this, as amiable as it was before.

Let it therefore be supposed, that no man ever actually loved God, looking on him as one that would damn him ; this won't excuse Mr. C—ll's assertion. For it doth not at all lessen it's evil import with respect to the divine character : As if this act impaired or extinguished his loveliness, and so destroyed the true and primary ground of love to him. Whence it wou'd come to pass of course, that no man, nor any other intelligence, can love him.—The ground of my exception to the assertion, don't turn on any opinion, that any man ever did, or ever will, love God under this view. But be this as it will, whether under this very view, the ground and reason for love to God universally doth not abide the same for ever : the contrary of which is the plain import of Mr. C—ll's assertion, in my apprehension.

3. Another imputation frequently repeated in the letter, is that we teach, that all true religion begins with a person's loving God, as one who will damn him ; on this account and reason, that the Lord will cast him off for ever, and punish him with everlasting destruction &c.

What is here imputed, is so far from being our doctrine, that it never came into our thoughts. It ought, at least to have been shewn to be a consequence from our doctrine, before it was imputed as such. But nothing like this is attempted. Nor is any thing said, as I find, to shew, that it follows from my rejection of the positions, which the letter is written to support.—I would explain my self on this head in general, in the following remarks.

1. Love

i. Love to the absolute God, or as I understand the phrase, to God as God, or to the divine nature, in its own absolute and essential properties, is that with which true religion begins. The object of the love and return of a penitent sinner, is the same, as the object of the disgust and rebellion of an impenitent transgressor. The being to whom he returns, is the same absolutely, from whom he revolted. The term and object from which the revolt was made, is the term and object to which the return must be made, if it be genuine. If not the same being absolutely considered, but one of a different character in any respect, be the object of the return, the return is not to the true God, nor can it be a true return.—Agreeably hereto is that apostolic distinction of repentance towards God, and faith towards Jesus Christ : which seems very plainly to hold forth, that God absolutely considered in his essential character, is the especial object of repentance ; as Jesus Christ, is the especial object of justifying faith.

Object. This represents the object of a sinner's reconciliation and return, to be a God out of Christ.—

Ans. A God out of Christ and in Christ, is the same absolutely considered, or in his nature, properties and character. These are not two Gods, different in disposition and qualities. If any conceive thus of the matter, they may on their principles, put the above objection.

Object. A God out of Christ, is a consuming fire,

Ans. If the objector's meaning in this phrase, be the same as the apostle's, *Heb. 12. & last.* God is so in his nature, whether he be considered in or out of Christ. This seems to be the doctrine suggested in that place.

Object. But God out of Christ is a consuming fire to all sinners.

Ans.

Ans. So he is in Christ to all sin and to all sinners that are out of Christ. It must be so, if he hate sinners as such, or considered in themselves; unless it be supposed that in Christ, God is altered in his temper and disposition from what he was antecedently to this relation: Or in plain language, that the mediatorial system hath made some change in God's moral character: consequently, that he is no longer the same God.

But truly I do not well understand what Mr. C—ll means by the expression of an absolute God. The letter on this head seems very much to represent this Being, whoever is meant, as an obsolete and disagreeable character; with whom men neither had, ought, or need to have, any concern; and whom it was impossible to love, or be reconciled to in their hearts. And the glory of the gospel seems to be placed very much in this, that it delivers men from any concern with that Being, whom he distinguisheth by this name.—Accordingly, he is express in blaming ministers for preaching an absolute God: i. e. as it would seem, for representing him as an object of men's love, inculcating on them the reasonableness and obligation of returning to and loving him absolutely in and for himself.—But doth he surely intend the true God by this phrase? And is it credible that he would not have the true God preached in his absolute properties and character; or would not have him preached in this view as an object of love; or one to whom rebellious sinners ought to return and be reconciled?—Indeed I do not understand him. I wish he had not left it so suspicious, that the distinction as it stands in his mind is exceedingly unsound; or that he doth not understand himself, and hath no consistent and determinate meaning therein. It would seem by his discourse,

course, that by the phrase of a God in Christ, whom he would have preached, he doth not mean the same Being whom he calls the absolute God. And this seems necessarily to imply the notion of two Gods; one of whom is an object of love; whom men can love, and whom he would have preach'd and recommended: the other not so, and therefore not to be preached.— But to return,

It is very plain, I think, that the scriptures hold forth no such sentiments on this head, as are suggested in the letter. Even the very text, 2 Cor. v. 20. produced to countenance the matter, is inconsistent with it. The plain meaning of it, is, that God absolutely considered, as the creator and governor of the universe, is carrying on a design of grace towards a world of rebellious men; that it consists primarily and immediately in reconciling these rebels to himself, i. e. to his nature, properties and character, as the absolute God, and governor of the universe; and that this design is carried on by God, in Christ; i. e. on the foot of his mediation and atonement.—If this be the sense of the passage, 'tis manifest that the notions suggested in the letter, p. 20, 21. are not only diverse from, but contrary to the scripture.

2 When the sinner is reconciled to God's character absolutely, to the whole of it, as glorious and amiable; or when he is bro't to be truly penitent, his repentance or reconciliation to God doth not in and of itself, entitle him to God's favour. This doth not make him an object of mercy and pardon, either according to law or gospel. For him to be reconciled to God, absolutely, is an infinitely fit and right thing, in itself. There is the highest ground and reason for it, in God's nature and character, apart from all consideration of the gift of Christ, to be the saviour of sinners.—But

'tis not fit and right, that God should be reconciled to the sinner, forgive him, and take him into favour, on the account of the latter's reconciliation to him. 'Tis only thro' Christ, on the account of his atonement and merit, solely and exclusively, that God can be reconciled to the sinner, however penitent he be, or however heartily reconciled he be to God's character. Hence arises the necessity of union with Christ, in order to a reconciliation with God : which union, according to the constitution of the gospel, is bro't to pass by faith. So a person must not only repent, but believe in Christ, in order to reconciliation with God.— And the more a regenerate sinner has of those views of God, which produce repentance in him, and reconciliation to God's character ; or the more penitent and truly reconciled he is to God's character, the more tho'roly convinced will he be, that 'tis not fit & becoming that God shou'd forgive such a rebel, and take him into favour, & bestow salvation on him, in respect to, or on account of any thing besides the perfect righteousness of the mediator, and of it, only and exclusively. And the more he has of this conviction, the more heartily will he approve of, admire, and put his trust in the gospel, as the wisdom and power of God unto salvation.

In order therefore, to have clear ideas on this subject, we must be careful not to confound these two things, viz. our reconciliation to God, and his reconciliation to us.—God, as God and governor of the universe, in the whole of his character, and in all those properties of which it is composed, is the object of a sinner's return and reconciliation. And the reason and foundation of such a return lies in the divine nature and character, absolutely considered, and in the natural relation we stand in, to God. The primary and

true ground of our return and reconciliation to God, is the absolute excellence of his character, and the holy properties which compose it. This in itself makes it infinitely fit and right for us to be reconciled and return to God—And it is this excellence of God, perceived and realized, that is the first objective ground and motive of a true penitent's return to God.—So that the design of Christ's mediation was not to establish an objective ground for the sinner's returning to God : or to do any thing more or less, to make it right and fit for him to be reconciled to his maker and sovereign. The use and application of any phrases in such a way, as to have this import, directly leads to error, in doctrine and practice. For it implies, that God was to blame in some respect, for the breach that has hapened between him and his creatures ; and that on this account, it was necessary something should be done by him, to make it comport with their natural rights and constitution, to be reconciled to him.

But as to God's reconciliation to us, the matter stands very differently. God was the same when man broke with him, he always was. He continued the same, in his own character and temper, afterwards, that he was before. God had done nothing before nor after it, to repent of ; or in regard to which, any satisfaction, reparation or abatement, was necessary or reasonable, on his part, in order to man's being reconciled to him. Man was the aggressor, and wholly to blame for the breach. God was the injured party. His name and character were vilified and abused. His laws and government were abhor'd and rejected, as unrighteous and tyrannical. In a word, the creature man, set up for itself, against its creator, and his most equal and fatherly government. This conduct cast an infinite reproach on God. It tended to defeat his

his end in creating the world, to unsettle his throne and disturb the happiness and order of the universe. All intelligences who had any sense of the infinite excellence of God's character, and the importance of his government, were sensible there was no ground left, on which it was fit for God to be reconciled to man. They were therefore astonished with what followed. God's conduct on this occasion, as much exceeded the extent of their understanding, as it did the benevolence of their hearts. He appointed his own son not only to be a mediator, but a sacrifice.— Thus, what did not before exist, he created. He established a ground for reconciling man to himself, and being reconciled to man in the mediation and atonement of Christ.— 'Tis alone in respect hereto, that God ever is, or that 'tis fit he ever shou'd be reconciled to a sinner. It wou'd be right to affirm, that God can't forgive even a penitent sinner, but in regard to the atonement of Christ, if the very supposition of such a character, without the previous consideration of the atonement, were not a gross inconsistency.

Thus 'tis manifest that there is a great difference between our reconciliation to God, and his reconciliation to us. There is no ground for the latter but in the atonement of Christ: But there is an objective ground for the former in the absolute excellence of God's character. We ought to be reconciled to him and return. There is the highest reason for it in his nature and our natural relation to him. And there is nothing on God's part to hinder, or make it impossible for us so to do.— Indeed the alienation of our hearts from God, and every motion of this kind, is total by nature. Therefore 'till a supernatural principle of love to God be planted in us, we never will. But irreconciliation from this cause, leaves us no less to blame,

blame, than if no such cause existed. Yea, 'tis from this cause, that the blame, guilt and demerit of not being reconciled to God, wholly arises. If something on God's part was the cause, so that while he persisted in it, it was impossible to be reconciled to him from the nature of his character or conduct, there would be no ground to blame the sinner. To do so would be very unreasonable. The supposition of any such thing is a reflection on God's character.

Having shewn the imputations, in which Mr. C—H's chief advantage against those he opposeth lies, to be groundless and unjust, I shall proceed to some remarks more particularly on the reasonings and doctrines contained in his letter.

1. The sum of his reasonings to shew that his positions have nothing derogatory to the divine character, nothing bad or unsound in them, is reducible to these particulars: That for a man to love God, while he looks on him, as one that will damn him, is the same thing in effect, as absolutely to love his own misery and destruction. But for any man to love misery absolutely, is inconsistent with his natural make and constitution: therefore it must be impossible for a man to love God, if he look on him as one that will not forgive and love him: therefore the positions have nothing in them of blasphemy.—On which I would make the following Remarks.

1. From his way of reasoning it is manifest, that I did not mistake Mr. C—H's intention in his last assertion; but that he meant to refer the impossibility of a man's ~~not~~ loving God, in the supposed case, to the act of God towards him, as the governour of the world, as being the cause thereof. For if it was not a natural impossibility before this act, and now, on the supposition of this act, it is become such, this act must have made

made it so : Because besides this act, there has nothing new happened to which such an effect can be ascribed. And if it be become a natural impossibility to love God, there is no fault in not loving him : or if there be, the blame must lie with God : Either of which alternatives is very shocking.

2. If it be a natural impossibility to love God in case he will not forgive a transgressor, but hold him guilty, then there is nothing unreasonable nor unfit in his not loving God. For certainly there can be nothing unfit or unreasonable in not doing what is inconsistent with the natural make and constitution of a rational creature. Nay it is very reasonable and fit, on Mr. C—'s plan, that he should not love God : Because his very make requires that he should not love his own misery.—And to love God in the case supposed, is to love his own misery.—Are these things consistent with the unchangeable excellence and right of God to the love of every rational creature, in every period and condition of its existence ?

3. There are but two cases in which it can become properly a natural impossibility for any man to love God, viz. the destruction or loss of the natural faculties of perceiving & loving any thing ; and the extinction of all beauty and amiableness in the divine character ; or God's ceasing to be an object of love in his nature. But the latter case can't be ; nor the former without the destruction of the very being of the soul. So neither of these cases will ever happen. Therefore it can never become properly a natural impossibility for any man to love God : or it can never become really inconsistent with his natural make and constitution.—

Object.

Object. But you allow that it is inconsistent with the natural constitution of a rational creature to love misery : but for a man to love God, if he will cast him off, is to love his own misery

Ans. When Mr. C—ll shall prove that two things distinct and diverse in their nature, such as the divine character and misery, are one and the same, and not distinct and different ; then I shall believe, that for a man to love God, in the present supposition, is to love his own misery. The case is very plain, the divine character is one thing, and misery is another. The former has that essentially belonging to it, which makes it an object of love in itself, to all intelligences, at all times. The latter is just the reverse. It has that in its nature which renders it in itself, an object of the displicency and avoidance of all rational beings for ever.

Object. No man can love that in which he sees his eternal misery.

Ans. It doth not hence follow, that no man can love God &c. for his misery doth not lie in act of loving him. To love God will not make any creature miserable in any circumstances. Besides, if he sees things truly, he will see, that his eternal misery does not lie in God's act towards him in casting him off ; nor properly and primarily arise from it ; but in and from his own wickedness and the opposition and repugnancy of his heart to every thing good and virtuous.

4. If for any man to love God, if he consider him as one that will damn him, be as Mr. C—ll says, the same in effect as to love his own misery ; then for any man to love God, if he consider him as one that will damn others, must be the same in effect, as to love the misery of others. For the force of words, and the nature of things would seem to be exactly the same in both

both cases — Mr. C — // argues, that for any man to love his own misery, is incompatible with the natural make of a rational creature. Therefore he can't love God, if he look on him as one that will damn him. For this is to love his own misery. Accordingly I argue thus on the same ground. For any man to love the misery of others simply is as really incompatible with the nature of moral virtue and goodness, as it is with his natural make to love his own misery. Therefore no good man can love God, if he look on him as one that will damn others : for this is to love the misery of others. — So we are got to this conclusion in Mr. C — //s way of explaining things, that neither saints nor reprobates can love God.

But I would close the remarks with what appears to me the true state of the matter ; praying that it may be attended to. — The whole cause why any man can't love God in any circumstances, is the badness of his heart. All impossibility, hindrance or obstruction with respect hereto in any case, arise wholly and at all times from this source. And not at all from any thing in the divine character or conduct with respect to him. The divine character is always excellent, and the divine conduct in all cases amiable and right. So the ground of love in the divine nature and conduct, is always uniformly the same & undiminish'd. There is with respect to no rational creature in any case, any natural impossibility of loving God ; or any thing in or about the act, that makes it in any circumstances inconsistent with his natural constitution. It is only inconsistent with the morally evil temper and disposition of his heart ; consisting fundamentally in two things, the absence of love to God's character, and the presence of enmity to it. — Hence arise what Divines call a *moral impossibility* of loving God, which is true

of all unregenerate men, in distinction from a *natural impossibility* hereto, which is not true, nor can be affirm'd with truth, or safety to the divine character, of any moral agent.

If God will condemn any man, this act supposeth that this man is void of all love and full of enmity to the divine character. From this temper the man is of, arises an impossibility of his loving God while it continues : for he cannot chuse at the same time contrary to what he chuses : he cannot love God, while there are no principles in his heart, but those of enmity and disaffection to God's character. But this impossibility is wholly from a moral cause, a bad disposition : it wholly consists herein. So the impossibility is wholly of a *moral* not of a *natural* kind. Or in plainer words, the impossibility of his loving God doth not arise at all from any inconsistence there is in the act with his natural make and constitution, but entirely from the opposition and disaffection of his heart to God's character.

In this view it is manifest, that the act of God in condemning the man, considered in it's full extent and effect, is not the cause, ground or reason, more or less, of his not loving God ; or of any impossibility with respect hereto. The matter stands after this act, just as it did before. There is no other impossibility now beside what there always was ; nor any additional ground or cause hereof. The act of God doth not produce any principle of vice or enmity in the man's heart to the divine character. Every principle, that is found there after this act, was there before it. And it was there in the same strength and efficacy. For the divine act doth not encrease or strengthen any vicious principle in the heart of a reprobate, any more than it begets it.— 'Tis true, it will bring the hidden native principles of the heart to light. This

act of God will make them ferment and operate with violence, just as the law makes sin abound, without any detriment to its purity or goodness. The man will drop the mask. He will now shew what was always his real character, and the true temper of his heart towards God, even in his best frames. He had once perhaps a good opinion of God, look'd upon him as an object of love, and felt kind affections towards him. But all being founded on self-love, and a false idea of God's character, and other circumstances dependent hereon; as soon as he finds that it is not such as he took it to be, the enmity that was always in his heart to the real character of God, will rage beyond measure. He will now openly blaspheme and hate the God of heaven, for the same reason the saints adore and love him.

From these remarks collectively considered, it is methinks very manifest, that Mr. C—// by the very attempt he hath made, to remove the charge of blasphemy against his positions, hath firmly established the ground on which that charge was laid. His positions and reasonings represent God's conduct to be of such a nature as furnishes good cause and reason to numbers of his creatures not to love him. His conduct is such as makes it inconsistent with their natural constitution. And all certainly have good cause for not loving any being whose conduct is such as makes it inconsistent with their natural make to love him. Thus there is good and sufficient reason from his conduct towards them, for millions of God's rational creatures not to love him; and no reason for the contrary. — And what are the consequences of that state and resolution of things which Mr. C—// hath given? The very recital of them is shocking. Are not millions of God's creatures justified in their open enmity and dis-

affection to his character ? Is it not God's fault that they do not love him ? Hath not his conduct made it inconsistent with their nature the very nature that he gave them ;—made it unreasonable and absurd for 'em to love such a character as his ; and discharged them for ever from all possible obligations so to do ? And is it not necessary that he should alter his conduct, in order to make it fit, reasonable, or possible in the nature of things for them to love him. And is there no reflection on the character of the blessed God, in assertions and reasonings, pregnant with these and such like consequences ? Is there no blasphemy contained in them ? My soul, come not thou into their secrets, however universally they may be admired and patronized !

2. I proceed to consider another of Mr. C—ll's positions, which is a foundation principle in his system of religion ; and, which, if it be not true, his whole system, so far as it rests thereon, is but an airy unsubstantial business. He hath most clearly express'd it in the 8th and in the 14th page, in the following words : “ In a word, all Divines in a manner, tho' differing in other points, agree in this, that in order to our loving God, we must see him as a God in Christ—willing to forgive us and make us eternally blessed.”

The unsupporte gloss on *Joh. iv. 19.* the maxim of love for love with the application of it, p. 8. the great principle, that 'tis incompatible with the natural constitution of man, to love any being in whose character and properties there is seen any opposition to his happiness and interest, however just it be, leave no room for doubt about the meaning of this position.

The doctrine here and thro'out the letter, is plainly this ; that the only possible *original & primary* ground of any man's love to God's character and acts, is the
relation

relation and respect they bear to the happiness or interest of self. 'Tis from respect to some benefit or advantage to self *primarily*, that any man ever does or can love God. This is the first and original foundation & motive of all love to him. After a man knows indeed that God loves him, that he has and will have a regard to his happiness, and to his interest (the primary ground and motive of all his love) is secure; then indeed he can "view and love him as adorable and amiable in all his perfections." But 'tis inconsistent with the constitution, and all the principles that are in any man to view & love God as amiable in and for the essential excellence of his character, as the first and primary consideration moving him hereto: or to view and love him as amiable, prior to, and without respect to God's loving him, and making him happy, as the first and primary consideration which moves him to view God as amiable, and to love him: This, I say, is plainly affirmed in the assertion, to be inconsistent with all the principles that are in any man, and so impossible. — Thus much as to the doctrine advanced and contained in the above assertion. —

But I do expressly deny the truth of the assertion, as it stands in the letter, besides others, for the following reasons.

1. The assertion is too universal. 'Tis made absolutely necessary to every man in order to his loving God that he see him willing to forgive his sins, & make him eternally happy, as the only primary consideration, ground and motive of his love to God's character. Had there been an exception made with respect to men truly regenerated by the Spirit of God, or true saints, and the doctrine laid down and intended only with respect to all unregenerate men, I had not objected to it. The latter being destitute of all holy principles,

ciples, of all love to God's character, and to all spiritual excellence, 'tis impossible, in this state of mind, that they should love God, only in respect to and on account of some interest, benefit and advantage to self; or some apprehension of God's willingness to make them happy.—But the assertion being universal, puts all, regenerate and unregenerate, on the same foot, with respect to the primary ground & motive of their love to God. And thus it makes the love of all to God, to originate from principles that are *common*, and consequently *natural* to all.

2. That is made the first ground and motive of all men's love to God, which is, and can be only a consequence and effect of love to God, viz. a man's seeing or believing that God is willing to forgive his sins, and make him eternally blessed. This appears thus.—God is not willing to forgive, and make eternally blessed, any impenitent person— Therefore no such person can really see that God is willing, *even in Christ*, so to do. If he sees and believes God to be willing to forgive his sins &c. he only sees and believes a falsehood. Unless the belief of a falsehood can make it a truth.—God is only willing for Christ's sake to forgive the sins of a true penitent believer. Such an one therefore only can truly see that God is willing in Christ to forgive his sins.—But now, no man can ever truly repent, before there be love in his heart to God's character. True repentance springs from love. 'Tis an absurdity to suppose otherwise. And if this be so, then no man can truly see God willing to forgive his sins and make him eternally happy, before there be love in his heart to God, and some effects of it. Consequently this view can't be the original cause and foundation of his love to God. That can't be the ground and cause of a thing, which is, and only can be, a consequence and effect of it.

3. The

3. The doctrine advanced in the above position doth deny that there is that in the divine character, which, tho' seen by any man, is a proper and adequate ground and motive of love to God, prior to, and a part from the consideration of self interest, or some benefit and advantage to self, which hath the first influence in moving him hereto. So that the view of God's regard, and subserviency to his interest and happiness, is laid as the only foundation on which primarily any man does or can love God. Or in other words, he does and can love God for no other reason *primarily* but that God loves him.—If Mr. C—ll should say, that he allows there is that beauty and excellence in the divine character, considered in it self, which, if seen by a renewed mind, is a proper and adequate ground and motive of love to God; and that he would not be understood to mean any thing to the contrary hereof; he would contradict his own doctrine, and according to his account, the doctrine of all Divines in general. For to allow that the beauty and excellence of the divine character is a proper and adequate ground and motive, in it self, of love to God, is the same thing as to allow, that a renewed man may and can love God, seeing him to be in himself essentially amiable; prior to, and without the consideration of any benefit he hath, or shall receive, or any regard God hath or will have to his interest and happiness. And consequently it is not true, that in order to love God, every man must see him willing to forgive his sins &c.

But Mr. C—ll intends to evince the truth of his doctrine by the number of its patrons. He boasts of *Town* and *Country*. He affirms, with triumph, that all Divines in a manner, are on his side. — If all this were true, it would not prove his doctrine true. The presumption would be against it. Fashion and the common

common vogue, are but a bad criterion of truth. False opinions in religion are natural. Of consequence, they stand much fairer for *general* currency, and patronage, than the true & supernatural doctrines of the gospel — But, notwithstanding, I can't agree the point in issue should be determined by the number of votes. yet I would pay a due deference to the judgment of grave and learned men, divines or others. But do not suppose that this amounts in any case to an implicit submission to their unsupported assertions, against which there is manifest evidence from scripture, reason and experience.

Mr. C—ll hath particularly mentioned some very respectable names, as authorities, on the side of his doctrine. The last mentioned in his letter, of whom I would take the first notice, is my venerable Colleague Dr. Sewall. — He says, “The object of love is what is apprehended good to us.” But doth it hence follow, that what is infinitely amiable is not *primarily* and in it self the object of love. Would he make the world believe, that this is the Dr's opinion? If it be not, he is no authority for Mr. C—ll. — But the Dr's sentiments, in this very passage are flatly opposite to Mr. C—ll's doctrine. “Love to God is a grace of the Spirit,” according to Dr. Sewall. But according to Mr. C—ll it is not, or it is not *necessarily* so. The grace of the Spirit is not necessary in order to love one that loves us, and that we see, seeks our interest. Meer self-love is sufficient to this effect. — “By love a person esteems and cleaves to God as his chief good.”* But whence doth this

* When God is called the *supreme* or *chief* good, it primarily denotes what he is in himself absolutely. This character, rightly understood, doth not arise from or depend on

this esteem and adherence, unto God *primarily* arise? The Dr. saith "from a spiritual sense of God's most amiable perfections." — What saith Mr. C——//? from "seeing God, in Christ, willing to forgive us, and make us eternally blessed." Let the impartial now judge, whether the Dr's account of the nature and primary ground of love be not plainly subversive of Mr. C——//s doctrine.

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on any particular beneficent acts towards men or angels, but the *eternal* and *essential* properties and excellencies of the divine nature. Benevolent propensities and beneficent acts do not make, or constitute God the chief good, nor are the ground and foundation of this character. They are the fruits & emanations of his proper nature, as the chief good; and by which, he is manifested to be such, to all the good part of the creation: But Mr. C——//s notion and application of this character makes the foundation of it to lie in particular acts of beneficence to apostate men.—Whereas God is as much the chief good now as he was before he cast off the apostate angels. And had he cast off every individual of the human race, and damn'd them all for their rebellion, he would have been the supreme good, and as much entitled to this character, as he is now. His casting off and punishing creatures for their disaffection to his being and government, is no imputation on his goodness, nor diminution of it. And that idea of divine goodness which supposeth or implieth any such thing, must needs, I conceive, be a false one.—It is derogatory to the divine mercy and grace, in the redemption of men by Jesus Christ. If the goodness of God required him to save any of the fallen race of man, their salvation could not be altogether of grace and mercy. If it were necessary to God to save apostate mankind, or any one of them, in order to act in a manner becoming his perfections and character; for this very reason their salvation could not be of meer
grace

The respectable name of *Owen* is placed in the front of Mr. C—//s authorities. 'Tis affirm'd with assurance, that this great Divine is against me, with respect to the doctrines of *faith* and *repentance*, as well as of the love of God. With how little reason or truth this is affirmed with respect to the latter doctrine, I shall now shew. And when Mr. C—// shall make it necessary, I will do it with respect to the former. I

grace and mercy : because it would have been wrong not to have granted it ; it would have been not only inconsistent with, but a real imputation on his character. Whereas, the very notion of being saved of grace and mercy, supposeth that it would have been so far from being an imputation on his perfections, not to have saved sinners, that it would have been consistent with all of them, to have cast off and destroyed them all. — The above notion doth also render God's conduct towards the angels "who left their first estate" irreconcilable with his character as the supreme goodness, or best of beings. And it can issue in nothing finally, but the absolute ruin of the divine character. — If God can act contrarily to or inconsistently with any one of his perfections, he can do so with respect to all of them. The reason is obvious. Nay, if he act contrary to any one, he doth so with respect to all. For each one perfection implieth in it in some way all the rest, from the peculiar simplicity and excellence of the divine nature. — And if God can act inconsistently with any of his perfections, in *any* instance, for *any*, even the *shortest* duration, he can, I apprehend, do so for ever. The latter is not more contrary in it's nature to his perfections than the former. — For instance, If God can subject any rational creature, that is in no respect faulty, or obnoxious in the sight of the law, to misery or pain for *one* day, hour or *moment*, he can do so for *two*. For the second moment is no more contrary to goodness than the first. He can do so for three four or four millions, for the same reason, And for the same reason, he

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I very freely own, there are divers Expressions in the Passage quoted in the letter from the Dr. that appear favourable to Mr. C—//s doctrine. But this appearance chiefly arises from the partial manner in which it is quoted. There is not that fairness in this matter, I should expect from one, who professeth such eminent singleness and purity of intention as Mr. C—// does. A person, who had nothing to form his judgment by, but the extract Mr. C—// hath made, would certainly conclude, that it was the Dr's professed design in the discourse, to state what appeared to him the

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can do so *eternally* as well & as *justly* as one moment. And on this state of things, and account of God's character and principles of conduct, where are we!— If it be said, that it is not contrary to the goodness of God, to subject a creature, that has in no respect any fault or guilt of its own, to misery for a certain time; because he can make up the misery he brings upon it, by a greater quantity of happiness in some future period. This is only evading the difficulty. I do not see it helps or easeth the matter at all. The difficulty here is, how it is consistent with the *nature of goodness it self*, not to mention justice, or with the character of an infinitely perfect and good being, to make an innocent creature miserable for any term of its existence, longer or shorter. To say, that God will compensate its undeserved sufferings afterwards, with happiness; if it contain any solution of the difficulty, I own 'tis too nice and metaphysical for my sight. How God can, consistently with justice or goodness, make any creature miserable, or have any hand therein, in any degree, or for any term of time, without any fault or demerit that is in any respect its own, is to me as unintelligible as the grossest absurdity. And how rational men are capable of believing so irrational and unscriptural a doctrine, who yet boggle at mysteries, is certainly not easy to account for on meer principles of reason.

primary objective ground of virtuous love to God; and that he made it to lie in the effects of the goodness, mercy, grace and bounty of God, as they *relate* to and determine on us and our happiness: Whereas, this is not at all the Dr's purpose and scope in the passage, but something really diverse from this.

He begins the discourse from whence the extract is made with this declaration, that the divine excellencies are a proper and adequate object of our love." He means that they are so absolutely and in themselves. — That "the special object of gracious love is the divine goodness." By which last expression he plainly means, not what is meant in the latter, but the moral perfection of the divine nature. For it is that into which he resolves the essential amiableness and excellence of the divine nature. Having laid this foundation, he proceeds to observe, that tho' the essential properties of the divine nature be the formal object of love, and particularly it's infinite goodness; so that where these are, there is the object and reason of love; yet this goodness of God absolutely considered, is not the only and exclusive object & ground of love. But we must have respect to it also, as flowing out & diffusing it self in mercy, grace and bounty, suited to give us the best relief in our present condition here & hereafter. He subjoins, "infinite goodness, exerting itself in all that mercy, grace, faithfulness & bounty, which are needful unto our relief and blessedness in our present condition, is the proper object of our love," in addition to the former considerations of the divine nature and its excellencies. That is, this emanation of divine goodness in the mentioned ways is to be taken in, as forming the compleat and comprehensive object of love. He immediately adds:— "Whereas therefore this is done only in Christ (i. e. the divine Perfections

fections mentioned are refracted and inclined towards sinners, and exerted for their relief & blessedness only in and thro' Christ) there can be no true love of the divine goodness," under this special view, and consideration, as having a favourable aspect and exercise towards us "but only in Christ."—The sense & import of which is, as is afterwards hinted, that for persons to pretend to have respect to and love God as their friend, and to find full satisfaction and rest in his perfections, even his goodness, as to the relief & blessedness they need, from any natural light and knowledge of them, or in any way, but in and thro' Christ, in the present lapsed guilty state of human nature, is but an imaginary and enthusiastic flight. The next sentence the Dr. adds, is a key to the whole passage, which Mr. C—ll hath left out, "I charitably believe" to use his own phrase, for this very reason. "The goodness of God as a creator, preserver and rewarder, was sufficient, yea the adequate object of *all* love antecedently to the entrance of sin & misery. In God, under these considerations, might the soul of man find full satisfaction as unto its present & future blessedness." But since the passing of sin, misery and death upon us, the case is wholly altered in this respect. We can find satisfaction and rest in God's perfection, as to the relief and blessedness we need, only thro' Christ and his atonement. What has been said, is sufficient to make it manifest that the scope and aim of the Dr. in the passage quoted from him, is nothing to Mr. C—ll's purpose; and that any expressions, which considered in a detach'd way, would seem to favour Mr. C—ll, yet, when understood and adjusted to the object and scope of the discourse, have no relation to his doctrine.

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But I shall next shew, that the Dr's authority and judgment on the point before us, is flatly opposite to Mr. C—//s doctrine. The Dr. hath condemned it in the most exprefs and pointed Language, in a most judicious serious and scriptural discourse ; and wherein he is professedly distinguishing between a common and a special saving work of God's Spirit in the souls of men, and stating that love to God and divine things with its primary ground and motive, which is gracious, and peculiar to saints, in contradistinction to that which is not gracious, but that the unregenerate may have. The passage is in his discourse of the SPIRIT, and in that Chap. which treats of his common work, preparatory to regeneration, p. 119.

"The effects of this (preparatory) work on the mind, " which is the first subject affected with it, proceed not " so far as to give it *delight, complacency and satisfaction* in the lively *spiritual* nature and excellencies of the things revealed unto it. The true nature of *saving illumination* consists in this, that it " gives the mind such a direct *intuitive* insight and " prospect into spiritual things, as that in their *own spiritual nature* they suit please & satisfy it. So that " it is transformed into them, cast into the mould of " them, and rests in them. *Rom* 6. 17. *Cap.* 12. 2. " *1 Cor.* 2. 13, 14. *2 Cor.* 3. 18. *Cap.* 4. 6. This, " the work we have insisted on reacheth not unto. " For notwithstanding any discovery that is made " therein of spiritual things unto the mind, it finds " not an immediate direct spiritual excellency in them, " but only with respect unto some *benefit or advantage* which is to be obtained by means thereof. It " will not give such a spiritual insight into the mystery of God's grace by Jesus Christ, called his "glory " shining in the face of Christ," *2 Cor.* 4. 6. as that
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“ the soul in it's *first, direct view* of it, should *for what*
 “ *it is in it self* admire it, *delight* in it, approve it,
 “ and find *spiritual solace* with *refreshment* in it. But
 “ such a *light* such a *knowledge* [this common work]
 “ communicates, as that a man may *like it well* in its
 “ *effects*, as a way of *mercy* and *salvation*.”

The Dr's works are full of this doctrine. But at present this is enough to enable the impartial reader to judge whether he be not expressly against Mr. C—ll's doctrine of the love of God; and whether it be not condemn'd by him as having nothing in it of a gracious and distinguishing nature, but is common to unregenerate men.

The late excellent Mr. *Edwards* hath written more professedly than any other Divine before him, that I know of, on the special nature & grounds of the love of true saints to divine things, in his *Treatise of religious Affections*. And it is written with that judgment precision & strength of evidence, which eminently distinguish all his writings. I shall not therefore make extracts from him, but hope that every person who is sincerely in quest of light and truth will peruse the book; and with respect to the point before us, particularly the 1, 2, 3 & 4th signs of gracious affections. — Some have complain'd that they could not readily take Mr. *Edwards's* meaning. To such especially, I would recommend Mr. *Bellamy's* late *Essay*; where the same truths are represented in a manner that may be more easy and familiar to them.

I intended to conclude this head with a true state of the doctrine about the love of God. But must forbear, as I find it would swell this script to an improper size: let me only hint the following thoughts.

In order to a man's loving God it is necessary —

1. That there be a subjective moral ground for acts of this

this kind, laid a-new in the soul itself. For where there is not a subjective moral ground for any particular kind of moral exercises, there can never be exercises of that particular kind. Such a ground there was laid in the soul of man in his first estate. But in the fall it was utterly destroyed. Nor is it within the powers of nature, *however assisted*, to re-establish it. — It consists in general, in creating anew in the soul of a person, a moral power, or capacity unto this act of love to God. The act, by which it is produced, is *properly* of the same nature and kind, as that of creation, or quickening the dead. By these images it is always described in *Scripture* — As to its *special* nature, it will at present sufficiently express my sense to say, that it is the *original* principle of *divine* love re-produced and created anew in the soul, which *died* and became utterly extinct in the fall of man. And it can come into *being* by no other way or means, than things or principles do, that have no *existence* nor *ground* of existence, but what lies in the power and will of God. — This appears to me the nature and sum of the scripture doctrine of regeneration.

2. In order to the act of love to God and divine things, there must be a representation made to the mind of the objective original ground & reason of love contained in the divine character and in the nature of the things of God. Their moral amiableness must be so presented to the mind as to *strike* it, appear to view, and command attention. The effect of this divine supernatural *illumination*, is, in the mind of the person, some direct, intuitive, perception and discerning of the moral beauty of God's character; or those perfections and properties which form and compose it, ascribed to him in scripture, and there manifested and exemplified in the most glorious and amazing works and designs.

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Where these two particulars concur, there is an adequate foundation laid for the exercises of love to God &c. Indeed, love will be the natural effect and result of this concurrence; whether a person see or believe that God will forgive his sins and make him eternally blessed, or not; yea, without any such previous sight or confidence.

But some will immediately object: This doctrine is contrary to scripture. The apostle says, 1 Joh. 4. 19. *We love him because he first loved us.* Doth not this text plainly hold forth and prove, that the saints *primarily* love God for his love to them? That his love appearing to them, in a *discovery* and *sense* of his willingness to forgive their sins, and to make them eternally blessed, was the *first* thing that moved them to love God?—I chuse here to give the answer of the aforementioned eminent Divine to this objection, in his *Treatise of religious Affections*, page 142.

“ In answer to this I would observe, that the apostle’s
 “ drift in these words is to magnify the love of God to
 “ us from hence, that he loved us while we had no
 “ love to him; as will be manifest to any one who
 “ compares this verse, and the two following, with
 “ the 9th, 10th & 11th verses. And that God loved
 “ us, while we had no love to him, the apostle proves
 “ by this argument, that God’s love to the elect,
 “ is the ground of their love to him. And that it is
 “ three ways—1. The saints love to God, is the fruit
 “ of God’s love to them, as it is the gift of that love.
 “ God gave them a spirit of love to him because he
 “ loved them from eternity. And in this respect God’s
 “ love to his elect is the first foundation of their love
 “ to him, as it is the foundation of their regeneration,
 “ and the whole of their redemption.—2. The exer-
 “ cises and discoveries that God has made of his won-
 F derful

" **darful love to sinful men by Jesus Christ in the work**
 " of redemption, is one of the chief manifestations
 " which God has made of the glory of his moral per-
 " fections to both angels and men; and so is one main
 " objective ground of the love of both to God; in a
 " good consistence with what was said before. —
 " 3. God's love to a particular elect person discover'd
 " by his conversion, is a great manifestation of God's
 " moral perfections & glory to him, and a proper occasi-
 " on of the excitation of love of holy gratitude, agreeably
 " to what was before said; And that the saints do in
 " these respects love God because he first loved them,
 " fully answers the design of the apostle's argument in
 " that place. So that no *good argument* can be drawn
 " from hence, against a spiritual and gracious love in
 " the saints arising primarily from the excellency of
 " divine things, as they are in themselves, and not
 " from any conceived relation they bear to their in-
 " terest."

'Tis very manifest Mr. *Edwards* did not under-
 stand this scripture to mean what Mr. C—ll supposeth
 it does: and that he tho't that there was no founda-
 tion in the text or context for the gloss the latter hath
 put upon it, and the application he makes of it from
 time to time.

The above comment appears to me to contain a just
 account of the passage, both as to its real *import* and
 utmost *extent*. And it plainly excludes Mr. C—ll's
 sense, as nor within the meaning of the passage. It is
 therefore necessary for him to disprove this sense, and
 establish his own by better reasons, or never hereafter
 to alledge this text in favour of his scheme. Let Mr.
Edwards's judgment stand for nothing, yet the reason
 of the thing makes this necessary. And as defendant
 in this cause, I have an equitable right to demand bet-

ter proof of Mr. C—ll, that this text is in his favour, than his unsupported assertions.

No less impertinently are other texts adduced and applied in the letter. In page 9, there is another instance with respect to *Rom. 12. 1.* on which this assertion is grafted. "He (*Paul*) took no other way to bring men to love God, than beseeching them by the mercies of God." How inconsiderately, not to say inconsequentially, this is asserted, will readily occur to every judicious reader conversant in the apostolic writings.—But from the purpose it is applied to serve in the letter, it is plain, the text is wholly misunderstood. To shew this, two remarks are sufficient.—1. The persons exhorted in the text, are such as were judged already to have their hearts formed and practiced to the love of God, from other causes and motives than those here mentioned. 2. The motives or the mercies of God whereby the exhortation is enforced, are their election, conversion, justification by the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed, the indwelling of the Spirit, and peculiar relation to God as his children.—Now can persons, who have no love to God, and consequently no repentance towards him, nor faith in Christ, and who make no credible profession of these things; be urged with propriety and reason, to live to God, and grow in love to him, from the consideration of their being partakers of these spiritual mercies? Doubtless they cannot. And can it be supposed, that an inspired apostle, should be the author of an exhortation so improper and absurd?

But I must break off these Disquisitions, without proceeding to other articles at present. There are other sentiments and doctrines in Mr. C—ll's letter that have yet passed no particular animadversions, that
are

are as obnoxious, as any that have been taken notice of, either in Mr. *Bellamy's* remarks, or in the preceding pages. They ought not therefore to escape. But this business must be refer'd to a II^d Part. And as this is designed, I will not now take any formal leave of the Reader.

May the Lord give us all to know the *truth* as it is in *Jesus*, and to walk in it as children of the light.

ERRATA.

IN page 3 line 12 for *impute to a man's* read *impute a man's*. page 4 line 5, 21 & 25 and in page 18 line 31, for *the impossibility of not loving God* read *the impossibility of loving God* page 20 line 27 for *vertuous* read *virtuous*. page 7. for *Hooper* read *Hoecker*.



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